

Administration for Children and Families (DHHS) Child Outcomes Research and Evaluation in the Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation

HEAD START RESEARCH

A National Laboratory Serving the Changing Needs of Children & Families in Poverty

Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES)

FACES has collected longitudinal data on two nationally representative samples of children and families, in 1997 and 2000. FACES provides descriptions of the characteristics, experiences and outcomes for children and families in Head Start and after a year of kindergarten. FACES reports and the complete battery of instruments used in the 1997-2000 study are available at:

www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/ongoing_research/faces/faces_intro.html

A new cohort of FACES is planned for Fall 2003.

American Indian & Alaska Native (AIAN) Head Start Programs

In 2001, ACF began a two-year initiative to explore the research needs for American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start members. The project will synthesize existing research, and consult with tribal members, program staff, and experts in early childhood education for AIAN children. Project questions include: 1) What are the research needs of AIAN HS programs? 2) How should research that is culturally sensitive and scientifically valid be conducted in these programs? 3) To what extent are the tools used to assess child outcomes culturally appropriate? 4) What technical assistance would be helpful for program staff to assess child outcomes?

www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/ongoing_research

Head Start Graduate Student Research Grants Program

This program provides support for graduate students who form working relationships with Head Start or Early Head Start programs in their communities. This research program also promotes the development of mentor-mentee relationships that support training and professional development as young researchers engaged in policy-relevant research. An emphasis is placed on supporting the active communication, networking, and collaboration among graduate students, their mentors, and other prominent researchers in the field, both during their graduate training, as well as into the early stages of their research careers.

www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/ongoing_research/hs/grad/intro.html

Head Start Quality Research Center (QRC) Consortium

The Head Start Quality Research Center (QRC) Consortium is designed to fund partnerships between academic researchers and Head Start programs to improve child outcomes in the areas of literacy, social-emotional development, and other domains of school readiness, through enhancements to curriculum, teacher training and mentoring, parent involvement, and assessment practices. The eight five-year projects feature experimental designs and cross-site data collection using the full FACES battery. Consortium members include Columbia University, University of South Carolina, Quality Counts, University of North Carolina, University of Oregon, High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, Education Development Center, and the State University of New York at Stony Brook. See http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/ongoing_research/qrc/qrc_2001.html

CORE provides scientific consultation, coordination, direction, and support for the implementation of short- and long-term research agendas within and across the four bureaus of ACYF, as well as other related ACF program areas. The four ACYF Bureaus are:

Head Start Bureau



Child Care Bureau



Children's Bureau



Family and Youth Services Bureau



CORE works within ACF and partners with other federal agencies and the broader research community to conduct program evaluations, develop new knowledge relevant to programs and policies implemented by ACF, and build research capacity within the field.

Head Start Impact Study

The Head Start Impact Study is a Congressionally mandated, longitudinal study of the impact of Head Start on approximately 5,000 three- and four-year-old children, from a stratified, national sample of grantees/delegate agencies. Children in the study have been randomly assigned prior to enrollment to either a treatment group (which receives Head Start services) or a comparison group (which does not receive Head Start services). Data collection began in the Fall of 2002, and will continue through Spring 2006, following children through the end of first grade. The multifaceted data collection includes interviews with parents, direct child assessments, surveys with Head Start and other care providers and teachers, direct observations of the quality of different care settings, observations of teacher-child interactions, and teacher ratings of children. The initial baseline data were collected in the Fall of 2002, and the Spring 2003 data collection will begin in April 2003. The next report to Congress is due in September 2003.

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/ongoing_research/hs/impact_intro.html



Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Research Design Development Project

The purpose of this project is to undertake a review of the current state of research knowledge and needs of Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) programs in order to plan for subsequent evaluations of these programs. Project tasks will involve the review and development of the measures and methodologies necessary to undertake a feasibility assessment and subsequent evaluation of MSHS programs, including logistic and cultural issues pertinent to migrant and seasonal farmworker families. A secondary purpose will be to identify and pilot test selected methodologies, measures, and instruments that will be appropriate for this population. Project period is from October 2002 through September 2004.

Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project

In order to evaluate EHS programs, which serve pregnant women and families with infants and toddlers, this project studied approximately 3,000 families living in 17 diverse communities across the U.S. The project has four central purposes:

1. implementation study: a study of programs
2. rigorous impact study: child and family outcomes
3. local research and policy studies
4. continuous program improvement.

The final report was released in June, 2002. Reports are available at:

<http://www2.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ehs/research/index.htm>

A pre-kindergarten follow-up is currently underway.

NICHD, ASPE, ACF & Ford Foundation Study of Low-Income Fathers

Twelve of the 17 Early Head Start research sites are participating in this study. The design includes:

1. Direct interviews with approximately 800 fathers when their children are age 2, 3, and as they enter Kindergarten.
2. Practitioner study focused on understanding strategies EHS programs use to engage fathers.
3. Study of newborns to provide in-depth look at first three years of parenting. 200 mothers and fathers will be interviewed when child is 1, 3, 6, 14, 24, & 36 months old.
4. Local researcher-designed studies focused on a variety of fatherhood issues.

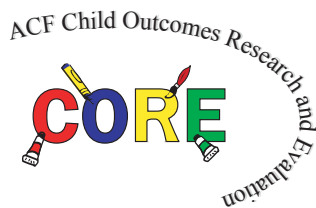
www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/ongoing_research

Head Start Child Outcomes Research Support Consortium

Five cooperative agreements were awarded in September 2002 under the Head Start Child Outcomes Research Support (CORS) Consortium to promote the school readiness of preschool children in Head Start. These four-year grants will fund partnerships between academic researchers and Head Start programs, designed to model use of child outcomes to improve local programs. In addition, the partnerships will consider the feasibility of using local assessment data for external accountability purposes. CORS Consortium members include Bradley Hospital/Brown University, University of Cincinnati, University of Kentucky, Johns Hopkins University, and Washington State University-Spokane. See http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/ongoing_research/cors/cors_intro.html

Early Promotion and Intervention Research Consortium

Five cooperative agreements, partnerships between academic institutions and Early Head Start programs, were awarded in September 2002 in order to create empirically validated approaches to providing comprehensive mental health supports for very young children and their families. E-PIRC consortium members include Tulane University, University of Maryland, University of Miami, University of North Carolina, and University of Oregon.



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INTERAGENCY PARTNERSHIPS

Interagency Early Childhood Research Initiative

The Interagency Early Childhood Research Initiative is a partnership among NICHD, ACF, NIMH, and ASPE within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and OSERS within the U.S. Department of Education. The initiative expects to support research on the effectiveness of interventions, programs, and curricula in promoting school readiness for children from birth through age five. Projects are expected to address both cognitive and socio-emotional domains of child development. Following a planning grant year, grant applications are currently under review, with awards expected in FY2003. See <http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-HD-03-003.html>

Department of Education Early Childhood

Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort

ECLS-K is a longitudinal study of approximately 23,000 children from 1,000 schools nationwide who began kindergarten in the fall of 1998. Children will be followed through the fifth grade. An estimated 3,000 will be former Head Start children. Head Start participation is being verified. Linkages are also being made with the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES). For more information: www.nces.ed.gov/ecls

Department of Education Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort

ECLS-B will provide detailed information on children's development, health, early care, and education in a nationally representative sample of 12,000 children born in 2001 who will be followed longitudinally from birth through the end of 1st grade.

ACF has funded the following activities:

1. Direct observation, videotaping, and coding of parent-child interaction
2. Direct observation of the quality of child care settings for a subsample of children.

For more information see: www.nces.ed.gov/ecls

CHILDREN'S BUREAU

Research Priority: the causes, prevention, assessment, identification, treatment, cultural, and socioeconomic distinctions, and the consequences of child abuse and neglect

National Survey on Child & Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW)

This project will follow a nationally representative sample of children who enter the child welfare system, assessing their social, emotional, cognitive, and functional status, as well as service needs and services provided for children and their families. Baseline, 12-month, and 18-month follow-up interviews will be conducted with 6,100 children, their caregivers, their caseworkers, and their teachers.

www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/ongoing_research



Termination of Parental Rights Project

This project will provide for a descriptive study of the effects of the termination of parental rights (TPR) on older foster youths' foster care and adoptive experiences. Project activities include analyses of AFCARS data and focus groups with judges, child welfare workers, foster parents, and foster youth.

www.acf.hhs.gov/prprgrams/core/ongoing_research

Multi-site Evaluation of Foster Youth Programs

Foster youth transitioning out of the child welfare system are at pronounced risk for homelessness, unemployment, substance abuse problems, and other unfavorable outcomes. The goal of this Congressionally mandated evaluation is to determine the effects of Independent Living Programs funded under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act (1999) in facilitating key self-sufficiency outcomes for participating foster youth. Currently, the project is in the planning phase where the primary goal is to locate six to eight programs that are willing to participate in a rigorous five-year evaluation of their program.

www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/ongoing_research

Child Welfare System's Response to Children of Color

This ongoing research project was funded to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Conduct literature review of empirical studies examining the child welfare system's response to children of color.
2. Identify promising programs and practices designed to address perceived racial or cultural disparities in service provision in the child welfare system.
3. Develop a methodology for, and pilot intensive qualitative observational studies on, policies and practices related to service provision for children of color in the child welfare system.

www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/ongoing_research

Consortium for Longitudinal Studies of Child Maltreatment

This five-site study will follow samples of children who are maltreated or at risk for maltreatment from the time the children are 4 years old until they reach adulthood. Interviews and assessments with children and parents are planned when the children are 4, 6, 8, 12, 14, 16, and 20.

www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/ongoing_research

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Funded Research

CAPTA authorizes funds to provide information needed to better protect children from abuse or neglect and to improve the well-being of abused and neglected children. Investigator-initiated awards were granted to seven researchers in order to advance knowledge and practice in the child abuse and neglect field. Grant periods are for three years in each of the seven sites.

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